



1910 • HIGHLAND CENTENNIAL • 2010

# GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • MARCH 2010



This is an architectural rendering of what a renovated Lincoln Center could look like.

## HIGHLAND RESIDENTS SUPPORT LINCOLN CENTER RENOVATION

A petition drive launched to determine support for the renovation of Lincoln Center has concluded and it appears the ayes have it.

During the monthlong drive that ended Feb. 14, more than 2,700 signatures were gathered -- 2,738 in favor of the project and 17 opposed.

The petition drive signatures will be verified and certified by county officials by the end of March.

"We have been absolutely thrilled with the support our residents have for this project," Council President Mark Herak said. "Lincoln Center is vital to our community and has served us well. At this point in time, the center is in dire need of repairs and major renovation. The project that is planned will expand what we are able to offer there as well as improve what we have."

The Park Board plans to renovate a portion of the existing facilities as well as tear down one wing of the former elementary school,

### WHAT'S NEXT?

After receiving authorization from the county and state, the next step will be the design phase, which is expected to last about six months. Construction could begin as early as December 2010.

constructing in its place an expansion that will include a fitness studio, day care and expanded meeting areas.

Parks Superintendent Alex Brown said the renovation will provide amenities to attract even more residents and host events that attract those who don't live in the community.

"Some of our events attract individuals from all over the country," he said. "Lincoln Center is often the first impression people have of our community. This long overdue upgrade will leave an impression we can all be proud of." 

### CELEBRATE A CENTURY

The town's biggest party has been scheduled -- and you are invited.

The Centennial Gala scheduled for April 10 will celebrate 100 years of Highland.

The black-tie-optional party will be the first major event celebrating Highland's founding and its success as a community where families were welcomed to live, work and play.

Some of those attending the gala will be going retro -- wearing clothes dating back to Highland's beginnings in 1910.

**WHEN:** 6 p.m. to midnight April 10

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center

**AMENITIES:** Open bar, dinner and dancing, sneak preview of the Highland Centennial documentary.

**TICKETS:** Tickets are \$75 per person or \$575 for a table of eight.

**RESERVATIONS:** Tickets must be reserved by March 31. Call Pat Popa for tickets at (219) 689-6559 or email [100@highland.in.gov](mailto:100@highland.in.gov).

### ULTA'S COMING TO TOWN

A new store in the Ulta cosmetics chain will open in Highland Grove in a few short months.

A portion of the former ToyWorks store located along the northern arm of the mall will be retrofitted to make way for the retailer that specializes in beauty products and brand-name fragrances.

Building Commissioner Ken Mika said he expects the store to open in late spring or early summer.

**SYMPHONY CONCERT**

The Northwest Indiana Symphony will perform at 7:30 p.m. March 20 at the Highland Highland School auditorium. "War and Peace" will feature a multimedia presentation of the music of Chopin as well as clips from "The Pianist".

**FOR MORE INFO:** Tickets range in price from \$10 to \$60 and are available online at [nisorchestra.org](http://nisorchestra.org) or by calling the box office at (219) 836-0525.

**YOUR COUNCILMAN****WARD 1**

**BERNIE ZEMEN**  
bzemen@comcast.net  
(219) 781-1056

**WARD 2**

**MARK HERAK - president**  
mherak@highland.in.gov  
(219) 838-0126

**WARD 3**

**DAN VASSAR**  
dvassar@highland.in.gov  
(219) 924-1945

**WARD 4**

**BRIAN NOVAK**  
bnovak@highland.in.gov  
(219) 810-7810

**WARD 5**

**KONNIE KUIPER**  
vice president  
kkuiper@highland.in.gov  
(219) 924-7820

**NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?**

Send your suggestions to:



**GAZEBO EXPRESS IDEAS**  
c/o Highland Town Hall  
3333 Ridge Road  
Highland • IN • 46322

[gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com](mailto:gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com)

The Gazebo Express is produced by:

The Idea Factory • (219) 381-0634  
[www.theideafactory.us.com](http://www.theideafactory.us.com)

Baxter Printing • (219) 923-1999  
email: [baxterprint@aol.com](mailto:baxterprint@aol.com)

# PARTNERS AGAINST CRIME

## WATCH PARTICIPATION UP, CRIME STATISTICS DOWN

When the next Crime Watch meeting kicks off March 10, Barbara Iler plans to be there.

She won't be alone. Attendance at the meetings is on the rise.

"I attended the very first Crime Watch meeting and have been a regular ever since," Iler said. "We've always had a group of regulars, but over the last several months, it's been nice to see more and more people getting involved. At the last meeting, the whole room was full."

Officer Shawn Anderson, who coordinates the Crime Watch program with Officer Brandon Norris, said he is gratified at the response.

"We believe it is important for residents to know what is going on in their town and to be on guard," Anderson said. "We always stress that if a resident sees something out of the ordinary to notify police immediately."

Police notifications logged during the last year show the message seems to be working.

"Residents are becoming more vigilant and calling police," he said. "Last year's statistics showed an increase in reported suspicious persons and vehicles."

Iler said she learns new information every

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Crime Watch meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. March 10 at the Highland Library, 2841 Jewett Street. Officer Chris Balbo will demonstrate the use of pepper spray. Residents also will learn the latest crime statistics and have the opportunity to ask questions of the officers.

**FOR MORE INFO:** Call officers Anderson or Norris at (219) 838-3184 or email them at [sanderson@highland.in.gov](mailto:sanderson@highland.in.gov) or [bnorris@highland.in.gov](mailto:bnorris@highland.in.gov).

time she attends.

"These meetings are never boring. That's for sure," she said. "We always have the chance to see what's going on in town and ask questions. They even have door prizes."

Anderson said citizens working with police is the ideal climate to reduce crime.

"I believe the Crime Watch program allows for police/community interaction, which is a vital part of the community-oriented policing philosophy," he said. "We are pleased to see people getting involved and look forward to involving more citizens in this effort."

## 2010 CENSUS: IT'S IN YOUR HANDS

Census forms will be delivered to every mailbox in town over the next several weeks.

Town officials are asking each individual and family to take 10 minutes to fill out the information and mail it back in the envelope that will be provided.

This applies to all residents whether or not they are U.S. citizens.

The town's census team -- Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin, Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro and Building Commissioner Ken Mika -- say there is no over-estimating the value of every resident being counted during the census.

It has been estimated that communities lose \$1,000 every time one individual is not counted. The loss to a community for a

family of four that is not counted: \$33,000 over 10 years. These are funds that are used to fund vital services and programs.

Data gathered during the count is used to help determine the distribution of federal funds to local government and to the state. Census counts are also used to redraw both federal and state legislative districts.

This year, the census forms have been simplified to make the process of gathering information easier than ever before.

"It is important for each and every person in town to fill out and return the census forms they will be receiving in April," Petro said. "We want to qualify for every federal dollar we are entitled to and the only way we can do that is for every person to be counted."

# HIGHLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT RANKS AMONG TOP IN NATION

Highland ranks among the top 15 percent of fire departments in the country, according to a national fire protection survey.

On a scale of one to 10 where one is the best and 10 is the worst, Highland was given a ranking of four.

What that means for the owners of most commercial buildings are insurance rates that are lower than they would be if the fire department had achieved a lesser rating.

"What this tells us is that we have achieved a very good ranking. While most homeowners aren't going to see a big drop in their premiums as a result, our rankings can have a very positive result on insurance rates for commercial buildings," Fire Chief Bill Timmer said. "We are looking now to see areas where we might be able to improve."

The rankings are part of the Insurance Service Offices' Public Protection Classification Program. Once every 10 years, ISO surveyors gather information and measure key benchmarks in every fire protection service in the country.

Classifying a community's ability to suppress fires helps municipalities evaluate their fire-fighting capabilities using objective data and a national standard.

Securing lower fire insurance premiums for communities with better protection provides incentives for communities that



## WANT TO VOLUNTEER?


The town has 42 volunteer firefighters. If you have considered the possibility of becoming a volunteer firefighter, please call Chief Bill Timmer at (219) 923-9876.

choose to improve their services.

Timmer said when he looked at the components that went into Highland's ratings, he could see that the town is closer to a ranking of three than it is to a five.

"Our guys are very proud of this ranking and they should be," he said. "We work very hard at preparing to fight fires in Highland. We've always made it a priority."

He said he is looking to see what can be done to shave a few points from the score and improve the town's ranking.

"We are celebrating the ranking we received but are constantly striving for improvements," he said. "Our goal now is to reach a ranking of three, which would make us the first paid on-call fire department in Indiana to receive such a ranking." 

# DYER PULLS OUT OF MAIN STREET PLAN

The town of Dyer has pulled its support from the Main Street revitalization project, leaving Munster, Schererville and Highland officials scrambling to find out if the project can be completed without them.


In a letter to U.S. Rep. Peter Visclosky and the remaining communities, Dyer said it did not have its portion of the federal match that would have been required.

The plan would widen the two-lane roadway from Indianapolis Boulevard west to Sheffield Avenue. The Highland/Schererville portion of the road east of Indianapolis

Boulevard to Kennedy Avenue has already been widened as part of the retail developments in both communities.

Because the road hugs the southern borders of Highland and Munster and the northern border of Schererville and Dyer, it was agreed the road project would be a combined effort of the affected communities.

Visclosky has been working to secure funding for the project.

Council President Mark Herak said the town will contact Visclosky to find out if the project can go forward without Dyer. 

## POLICE WARN RESIDENTS ABOUT GYPSY CRIMES

Since the beginning of January, at least two Highland residents have been the victims of gypsy scams.

Police Chief Pete Hojnicky warns that criminals pose as contractors, utility workers or individuals needing to use the phone; wanting to write a note for a neighbor; looking for a lost pet; or a nurse taking blood pressure. While they distract the homeowner, others burglarize the home.

Hojnicky said if someone comes to your door and you don't know who they are -- call police immediately. If you see someone approaching the home of an elderly neighbor, take down a license plate number.

"The easiest way to keep from becoming a victim is simply to keep your home locked, even when you are working in the yard or shoveling snow. Don't let anyone into your home you do not know."

## FEDERAL GRANT MAY HELP HIGHLAND GO GREEN

The federal government may help Highland replace street and traffic lights with more efficient bulbs.

Funded by federal stimulus dollars, Highland may apply for up to \$650,000 to make the switch from high-pressure sodium bulbs with more efficient LED bulbs.

Not only will the bulbs last longer than conventional lighting, the project could dramatically lower the town's monthly energy costs.

Town officials were made aware of the ongoing green initiative by representatives from Graybar, who have offered to assist in writing a grant to help secure funding.

Graybar's Robert Young told council members he believed as many as 100 street lights and another 100 traffic light bulbs could be replaced using the grant.

Young said each bulb change would reduce the wattage needed to power a single traffic light from 60 watts to 7 watts -- a savings of about 90 percent.





## EASTER EGG HUNTS

**FOR ELEMENTARY:** Children ages 7 to 10 are invited to join in the fun, hunting for colored eggs packed with treasures.

**WHEN:** 11:30 a.m. March 27

**WHERE:** Sharp Athletic Complex

**INFO:** Admission is \$3/\$5 per child. There is a limit of 75 children. Register by March 20 at Lincoln Center or by calling (219) 838-0114.

**FOR PRESCHOOLERS:** A special egg hunt for children too young to attend elementary school will be held at 10 a.m. April 3 at Lincoln Center.

**INFO:** Call Joan Ray at (219) 923-6376.

## TRASH TO TREASURES

The Spring Flea Market promises to have more bargains than ever. Collectors of comic books, sports cards, Hot Wheels, autographed memorabilia and other collectibles will not be disappointed! Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will promote the card show in conjunction with the Lincoln Center Indoor Flea Market. Vendors will be selling household items, toys, books and more. Vendor space is still available. Concessions provided by the Kiwanis and Key Club.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 20

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**INFO:** Call Parks and Recreation at (219) 838-0114.

## SPRING CONCERT

Celebrate Spring with joyful tunes at the Highland Community Band's Spring Performance. There is no cost to attend.

**WHEN:** 7 p.m. March 28

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

**INFO:** For more information about the concert or to become part of the Community Band, call Parks and Recreation at (219) 838-0114.

## LITTLE LEAGUE SIGN-UPS

Highland Little League has scheduled one day for late registration. Ages 4 to 12 must be 4 by April 30.

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to noon March 6

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**INFO:** Call HLL President Dan Vassar at (219) 924-1945.

## BABE RUTH SIGN-UPS

Highland Babe Ruth Baseball will hold its final sign-up for the 2010 season. Registration fee: \$185

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 13

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**INFO:** Visit the Babe Ruth site at <http://highland.baberuthonline.com>

# BREAKFAST WITH THE EASTER BUNNY

Meet and greet the long-eared star of the season. Join the Easter Bunny and his other furry friends for a continental breakfast. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the event also features basket raffles and photos with the Easter bunny.

**DATE:** Saturday, March 27

**LOCATION:** Highland High School Cafeteria

**SEATINGS:** 8:30 a.m. or 10 a.m.

**FOR TICKETS:** Tickets are \$5. There are a limited number of tickets available for each of the two seatings, which must be purchased in advance at Lincoln Center or by calling (219) 838-0114.

